

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

NIC-01 DRC-01 /139 W

----- 024067

R 311745Z JAN 74

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6371

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PAIRIS

AMEMBASSY OROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, XG

SUBJ: REACTIONS TO THE JANUARY 19 EAST-EST TRADE UNION MEETING

REF: A) GENEVA 0341; B) LONDON 01195; C) BONN 01424

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. MOST BRUSSELS BASED INTERNATIONAL TRADE

UNION LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE

THUS FAR ARE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE JANUARY 19

EAST-WEST MEETING AT GENEVA. NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS ARE THEO

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RASSCHAERT, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION

CONFEDERATION (ETUC), AND SOME ICFTU SECRETARIAT AND

GERMAN DGB OFFICIALS HERE WHO ARE URGING WEST EUROPEAN LEADERS TO DRAW A FIRM DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONTACTS AND STRUCTURED TIES WITH EAST BLOC UNIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VIEWS OF JEAN KULAKOWSKI, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (EO/WCL), ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE OF A MAJORITY OF LEADERS, WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED, WHO CONSIDER THE RECENT EAST-WEST MEETING IN A FAVORABLE LIGHT. KULAKOWSKI DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF EUROPEAN LABOR UNITY. HE SIGNED OUT THE FRENCH FORCE OUVRIERE IN STRONGLY CRITICIZING A HORT CORE "MINORITY" OF TRADE UNION LEADERS WHO VIEW THE RESULTS OF THE EAST-WEST MEETING AS A SOVIET VICTORY. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE WEST EUROPEAN UNIONS WENT TO GENEVA WITHOUT A COORDINATED STRATEGY, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THEM WERE JUST AS INTENT AS THE SOVIETS IN SEEKING AN AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND THE EAST-WEST DIALOGUE.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MOOD AT ICFTU HEADQUARTERS IS ONE OF DEEP SKEPTICISM. ONE STAFFER LIKENED THE SOVIET SUCCESS AT GENEVA TO A HUGE SNOWBALL RUNNING DOWN HILL WHICH WILL BECOME INCREASING MORE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL AS IT PICKS UP MOMENTUM. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY RASSCHAERT WHO OPPOSED HOLDING THE JANUARY 19 MEETING AND WHOSE DEPARTURE FROM GENEVA BEFORE THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE OPENED HAS BEEN VIEWED BY SOME UNION LEADERS AS A "CHILDISH" EXPRESSION OF HIS OPPOSITION. ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN HAS BEEN AWAY FROM BRUSSELS AND THEREFORE UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT. HOWEVER, HE IS REPORTEDLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PACE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE EAST AS WELL AS THE MARGINAL ROLE ACCORDED THE ICFTU IN THE PROCESS.

4. DGB REPRESENTATIVES IN BRUSSELS HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER THE RESULTS OF THE EAST-WEST MEETING PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO THE UNSTRUCTURED COURSE RELATIONS WITH THE EAST SEEM TO BE TAKING. THE GERMANS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY EMPHASIZING THE NEED TO AVOID ORGANIC TIES WITH EAST BLOC UNIONS. AT THE JANUARY 25 ETUC EXECUTIVE MEETING (SECC EC BRUSSELS 0620)
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DGB LEADER VETTER, ACCORDING TO A SOURCE WHO WAS PRESENT, STRESSED THIS POINT AND ISSUED A STRONG WARNING TO THE ETUC LEADERS ON THE DANGERS POSED TO THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT BY AN UNCOORDINATED AND UNNECESSARILY HASTY APPROACH TO EXPANDING EAST-WEST RELATIONS.

5. SOME MISSION SOURCES ATTRIBUTE THE "LOVE-IN" NATURE OF THE EAST-WEST MEETING TO FINELY TUNED ADVANCE ORCHESTRATION BY THE BRITISH TUC AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS WHO, REACHED THEY CLAIM, AGREEMENT PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE PERMANENT MACHIN-

ERY AND ILO UNBRELLA ISSUES. BECAUSE OF THE PROSPECT OF STRONG GERMAN OPPOSITION, THESE SOURCES SAY, THE BRITISH AND SOVIETS AGREED TO MAKE NON-ISSUES OF BOTH. THEY ALSO BELIEVED THAT THIS ACCOUNTS IN LARGE PART FOR THE NEBULOUS CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING WHICH DOES NOT SPECIFY THAT THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD WITHIN AN ILO FRAMEWORK OR DESIGNATE A SITE FOR THE MEETING.

6. ACCORDING TO MANY LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE, THE SITE OF THE NEXT MEETING AND WHETHER OR NOT THE ILO UNBRELLA IS USED ARE RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT QUESTIONS. HOWEVER, A MAJORITY OF THEM SEEM TO PREFER VIENNA OR HELSINKI TO GENEVA.

7. COMMENT. THE DGB POSITION, AS REPORTED TO US HERE IN BRUSSELS, SEEMS SOMEWHAT UNTENABLE. THE DGB IS A FORMIDABLE POWER IN THE ETUC AND THE ICFTU AND, EVEN IN A MINORITY POSITION AS IT CURRENTLY SEEMS TO BE ON THE EAST-WEST ISSUE, IT IS A WEIGHTY DETERRENT TO A HEADLONG RUSH EASTWARD. NEVERTHELESS, THE GERMAN CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION AND CHARACTER OF EVOLVING EAST-WEST TRADE UNION RELATIONS COULD DIMINISH IF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL CONTACTS BETWEEN WEST EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR EAST BLOC COUNTERPARTS CONTINUE INCREASING AT THE PRESENT RATE. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH WILL LIKELY COMPOUND MATTERS FOR PROPONENTS OF A GO SLOW POLICY IS THE AFFILIATION OF CHRISTIAN UNIONS WITH THE ETUC SINCE MANY CHRISTIAN LEADERS WOULD FAVOR A MORE ACCELERATED APPROACH TO ESTABLISHING EAST-WEST TIES. GREENWALD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EAST WEST TRADE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, LABOR UNIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ECBRU00646
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974013/aaaaacig.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) GENEVA 0341; B) LONDON 01195; C), BONN 01424
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <12 APR 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTIONS TO THE JANUARY 19 EAST-EST TRADE UNION MEETING
TAGS: ELAB, XG, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005